

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT RECORD KOBUK-SEWARD PENINSULA RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

Meeting Location: Kiana, Alaska

Meeting Date: March 29, 2004

Purpose: Identify public issues and concerns with BLM managed lands in the Planning Area.

Number of public in attendance: 16

BLM personnel in attendance: Jeanie Cole, Shelly Jacobson, Dave Parker, and Randy Meyers

Meeting format: Through a PowerPoint presentation, attendees were introduced to what an RMP does and why BLM is doing a new one. They were also given examples of decisions that might come out of an RMP. They had the opportunity to review maps of land status, State-identified RS2477 routes, reindeer grazing allotments, anadromous streams, Seward 1008 PLO locations (mineral entry), guide use areas, and game management units in the Planning Area. Participants were asked to express their concerns and issues with BLM-managed public lands. These are documented below. An Interested Party letter explaining the types of decisions made in the RMP and giving an overview of the initial steps in planning was distributed. In addition, a small-scale map of the planning area, a copy of the planning website home page, and copy of the PowerPoint presentation were available for attendees to take. A scoping comment sheet that can either be filled out at the meeting or returned to BLM at a later date was also made available to attendees.

Issues/Questions/Concerns:

1. BLM needs to revise wording on the planning home page to clarify which lands are being covered by RMP. It appears that FWS lands in the Selawik Basin are included in the Plan because the web site included Selawik Basin in the description and it referred to public lands and federal public lands, not just BLM lands.
2. What is the status of legal easements going up the Squirrel River? Need to know if these will be open to the public. The original site of the easement was a boat landing. It consisted of a cat trail through NANA lands to BLM lands. NANA has been putting up no trespass signs. It is at the confluence of two creeks then goes north to Klery Creek mine area. EIN 8 is the easement in the Squirrel River to Klery Creek.
3. The issue was trespass on Native Corp. lands: Need to know how BLM determines the mean high (OHW) water mark for the Squirrel River and how the

- public will know where the OHW mark is and when they are in trespass. Where do the BLM lands begin on the edge of the Squirrel River? Can you assume that the edge of the vegetation is the mean water line?
4. Are the gravel bars in the Squirrel River State land or Native Corporation lands? BLM needs to clarify mean highwater and land status in RMP including status of sand bars. The sand bars are large and can be used to land planes and 4-wheelers can take off from there.
 5. Clarify what permits, if any, would be necessary to take a jet boat up to the N. Fork of the Squirrel River, drop off a 4-wheeler and go hunt sheep. If this becomes a common request, does BLM foresee problems with jet boats? Younger people have better jobs and more money. They will want to do things like this in the future.
 6. Recreation and OHV management: If zoning is done, need to set a limit on the number of users that would be allowed in the Squirrel River. Should be some type of ATV zoning – a restriction on how many are allowed. Could BLM require a permit for hunters using 4-wheelers on BLM lands? How would trails be designated for 4-wheeler use? The local residents should have a say in what trails are designated.
 7. What is the upper limit of recreation users/guides on the Squirrel River? BLM should limit the number of hunters in the Squirrel River.
 8. State guide system is a closed system. You cannot get a guide license unless the other registered guides want you to. Registered guides from other states fill up Alaska. It is better to encourage local guides to get into the business. Could there be some preference for local guides? Guiding is a lucrative business—you can get up to \$18,000 for a grizzly hunt.
 9. Access to mining claims requires carrying a letter stating that the GVW is less than 2000 lbs. Want this restriction evenly applied to hunters and other users.
 10. Squirrel River may have high mineral potential. Mining could be developed on BLM lands. One person expressed the thought that they didn't need more mining in the area.
 11. May want to have more access to resources to balance family with economic development.
 12. More roads may be needed to develop natural resources. BLM could establish transportation corridors or issue ROWs for roads. Another person expressed the opinion that they did not need any additional roads.
 13. People have seen natural gas bubbling out of the ground especially in the spring. There is concern about high cost of heating oil and shipping costs are high. If there is natural gas nearby, they should be able to use it in their community.
 14. When economic development starts affecting the caribou migration, people will start objecting to it. Development needs to be done in a controlled manner so that it does not negatively affect subsistence resources and access.
 15. Last 20 years have seen big changes in location and migration of caribou. Caribou are going to the Squirrel River and Selawik later and later in the fall since BLM began managing the Squirrel River. When people have extra money, they can follow and find caribou by boat, but can't do that if they don't have extra cash –

so it is important that the caribou migrate close to Kiana, Selawik, and other communities.

16. The area is probably high in unexplored mineral potential in the Squirrel River. Mineral development is a good area to focus on. A better tax base is needed for the NW Arctic Borough. There is not much forestry or other resource development potential.
17. The dates when big game hunters are allowed in the Squirrel River has impacted the migration route of caribou especially in the last 3-4 years. Traditional knowledge says to allow the first group of migrating caribou to pass through the area before hunting. Outside hunters do not honor this.
18. BLM should set a time frame when hunting guides are allowed in the Squirrel River such that it does not affect migration of caribou.
19. Air traffic from guides and transporters over Selawik has affected the number of caribou and is affecting their migration. Not all air traffic is from KOTZ, some is directly from Anchorage.
20. Need better law enforcement on guides and transporters. Waste and meat spoilage is a problem people have observed. People are trophy hunting and are not concerned about bringing the meat out in good condition. Make hunters take the meat all the way home with them instead of leaving it in Alaska. BLM needs to do something to insure that the meat is not wasted.
21. BLM should look into assigning guides exclusive use areas / to limit them to a certain area.
22. There is no State limit on the number of guides and transporters now in NW Alaska; about 60 operators in NW Alaska; need help from state legislators.
23. BLM should consider some kind of escapement strategy for caribou (like salmon). Let x # go through before allow hunting to begin in the fall.
24. BLM could cooperate with local government for law enforcement. Would like to know what the procedure would be for co-management of the Squirrel River between BLM and the Traditional Council—give them some authority—they can patrol. They know their own people. Work with tribal authority.
25. Concerned that the RMP covers a very large area and impacts many communities. BLM should make an effort to go to more communities because the impacts to villages further from the BLM lands are significant. Selawik is 30 miles south but activities and regulations in the Squirrel River highly impact their lifestyle. Even things happening on the North Slope affect the villages further south.
26. Would like to know if a semi-permanent seasonal tent/camp could be set up to base a traditional trapping operation. Could past use (traditional hunting and trapping site) allow for some sort of subsistence use of site? Is BLM able to authorize the construction of a subsistence camp on the Squirrel River?
27. BLM needs to do better enforcement to ensure compliance on the stipulations in the guiding permits, i.e., human waste disposal, caching of equipment, tent frames, burning of trash. The NPS comes in and checks camps after the guides leave. Burying trash is not a good idea.
28. Concerned that the big game hunters may be harvesting a lot of fish on the Squirrel River and the tributaries to it. BLM may want to set limits on the #'s of fish allowed per day through the guide permits.

29. There are many cultural sites on the Squirrel River. Some may already be impacted. Many are probably undocumented.
30. BLM should ask NANA if we might gain access to resource data they have collected. Check NANA.COM
31. Squirrel River mineralization—naturally occurring arsenic may be leaching out into the water.
32. Suggest that BLM bring a state representative to planning meetings so they could answer some of the questions and hear the concerns related to state lands.
33. Educate sporthunters to respect local people and resources.
34. BLM needs to clean up the trespass site on headwaters fork of S.R.- on low hill on west side of the drainage. There are blue tarps and signs of prospecting activity. Was this prospecting activity legal?
35. Protection of subsistence resources should be a priority. Subsistence hunters have fewer resources, less money to pay for gas and travel. Hard to compete with sporthunters.

Written comment submitted after meeting:

1. We are experiencing later arrival of bull caribou in the fall in Selawik. This may or may not be attributable to the number of Squirrel River hunters during the same time. As a control factor, we request that BLM assess whether to implement mid-Sept as start dates for “commercial drop offs”, guiding, etc. as a policy for a few years (3-4 years).